

Lucie Wray Todd

(1931-2016)



In Houston Audubon history, Lucie Wray Todd is a noted philanthropist, activist and good friend. She served on the Board of Advisors from 2003-2016. Since 1990, Lucie supported Birdathon, Year-End Appeals, and Galas every year until her passing. However, her most impactful achievement was the establishment of nature education classes in Houston Independent School District (HISD). Inspired by the newly formed National Audubon's Audubon Adventures program, she coordinated the tasks required to implement a nature education curriculum in all HISD 4th grade classes. She personally raised, in less than 6 months, the \$70,000 necessary by writing grant requests to foundations and friends. Then over the next three years, she raised over \$300,000. That was the beginning of nature education in Texas public schools and it has continued in HISD to this day. The benefits to conservation will be perpetual so long as children are introduced to nature. Lucie was the Honorary Chair at both the 2004 "For the Birds" gala and the 2016 "Education That Soars" gala. Houston Audubon Society, and the future of environmental conservation in Texas, are forever indebted to Lucie Wray Todd.



HAS HERO - Lucie Wray Todd

By Joy Hester, HAS Executive Director
January/February 2005

When Lucie Wray Todd was a little girl, her grandfather would take her for walks with him to check on his trees. She remembers well his pride in those oak saplings as he encouraged her to observe the wildlife and birds, including a rare white robin, that benefited from the trees. Her grandfather was J. S. Cullinan, and the saplings he treasured are now the giant oaks that grace the Shadyside enclave and extend onto Main Street near Hermann Park.

Well known for his successes in the Texas oil industry, Mr. Cullinan was also known to family and friends as a self-taught naturalist and ardent bird lover. His love of nature was passed on to his daughter Margaret Cullinan Wray and to his granddaughter Lucie, who in turn passed it on to her children. Grants from the Margaret Cullinan Wray Charitable Lead Trust and the Magnolia Trust, administered by Lucie and her children Emily and David, have benefited Houston Audubon Society and other conservation organizations all over the United States for the past two decades. The Wray Trust was a founding member of Texas Environmental Grantmakers Group, which seeks to educate Texas foundations and other funders about environmental issues and the organizations that address those issues.

Lucie Wray Todd serves on the HAS Board of Advisors and has supported Houston Audubon in various ongoing ways. She personally helped raise funds to place Audubon Adventures materials in Houston ISD classrooms during the 1990s, and a generous gift from her in 2003 will help build a new garage/storage building for sanctuaries at High Island on the Bolivar Peninsula. In 2004 she was Honorary Chair of the HAS "For the Birds" Awards Dinner. Those philanthropic activities are merely her "town job."

Lucie spends half of her time as managing partner of the Wray Ranch, a working cattle ranch in Colorado County. Following her parents' lead, Lucie and her children are focused on all aspects of sustainable agriculture and improving wildlife habitat on the ranch. In commendation of their private land conservation efforts, they have been honored with the prestigious Lone Star Land Steward Award from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

It is clear in talking with Lucie Todd that she prefers to focus the conversation on preserving old trees, environmental education, sustainable agriculture and improving wildlife habitat rather than on her personal contributions. She sees herself, she says, as something of a "catalyst in the corner," and prefers to remain offstage whenever possible. Her good works speak for her, though, and Houston Audubon is proud to have her as an Advisory Board member and friend. Grandfather Cullinan would have been proud, too.



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The Naturalist January 1994 - Audubon Adventures:

Bringing Environmental Attitudes to Students
BY DOLORES SANDLING AND MARY BOWEN

Share your enthusiasm for the natural world by introducing a classroom of fourth-graders to Audubon Adventures.

In 1983 the National Audubon Society created Audubon Adventures, a wildlife and ecology education program for elementary children. The Houston Audubon Society was able to become a part of this important outreach effort in 1990 through generous grants from the Brown Foundation, Lucie Wray Todd, Texaco, Chevron, The William Farish Stamps Fund and many others. A decade later, HAS has fulfilled its mission of annually providing Audubon Adventures to all 24,000 fourth-graders in the Houston Independent School District.

What does Audubon Adventures provide? First there is Audubon Adventures magazine. Packed with articles, activities and vocabulary on specific natural subjects, the publication is accompanied by a teacher's manual. Teachers are provided a minimum of three workshops per school year which train them to incorporate household items or found objects into their curriculum. They are introduced to games that illustrate habitat and the food chain, and they are shown how to use "discovery boxes" illustrating the forest floor and the relationship of all living organisms to the ecosystem.

Many teachers have chosen to incorporate Audubon Adventures into their science curricula. To facilitate this inclusion, participating teachers receive a syllabus for Audubon Adventures, a schedule of workshops and information on supporting materials. In the past, supporting materials have included posters, guides to Texas birds, birdhouses and Bill Oliver's sing-along

cassette about conservation. The supplemental materials bring the monthly readers alive, making natural science fun and interesting.

Dolores Sandling oversees Audubon Adventures for HAS. A veteran teacher and retired HISD elementary principal, she maintains close ties to the administration and the schools. Using her understanding of the HISD system, Dolores disseminates information on the program and follows up with teachers to monitor classroom use.

Since natural science education at the elementary level is vital to the conservation of our natural resources, HAS is deeply committed to this project. In order to maintain our level of commitment, we have streamlined our program cost by 25 percent while serving the same number of classrooms. Your support of Audubon Adventures will help assure the future of this critical program. Individual classrooms may be sponsored by Audubon members at \$35 per classroom or you may donate monies to be used in the 1994-1995 school year. Your check, made payable to the Houston Audubon Society, will help inspire a younger generation to appreciate our natural world.

2016 "Education That Soars" Gala Script:

We are here tonight to celebrate "Education that Soars" and honor a very special person. For over 47 years, Houston Audubon has been educating people of all ages to the importance of birds, wildlife, and their supporting habitat.

We are so thankful for all those who have helped our education program soar. And tonight, we'd like to recognize one very special person who helped lay the foundation for our education programs to grow in scope and impact.

Tonight, we pay tribute to Lucie Wray Todd, our honorary chair, and the inspiration behind Houston Audubon's education award.

Lucie's love for birds, nature and Houston is pure and impactful. In 1992, Houston Audubon named its education award in Lucie's honor. Her amazing accomplishment of raising over \$300,000 for Audubon Adventures, an education program offered to all fourth-grade Houston independent school district classrooms, was the beginning of great things to come. This award exemplifies how important Lucie is to Houston Audubon and to our mission. We will be forever grateful to Lucie for all she has done for Houston, for Houston Audubon, and for the birds.

2016 "Education That Soars" Gala Program: Lucie Wray Todd

Lucie Wray Todd devoted much of her life to conservation. This inspiration came at a very young age from her mother and father, Margaret Cullinan and Andrew Jackson Wray. Her mother was an active member of the Garden Club and gave land in the Piney Woods to the Outdoor Nature Club. Her father was involved in conservation by protecting rural land through his land and cattle business.

It even goes back one more generation with her grandfather, Joseph Stephen Cullinan. He founded The Texas Company, eventually known as Texaco. He built and lived in the private subdivision called Shadyside. J.S. Cullinan wondered who will feed the birds of Shadyside. In the booklet "J.S. Cullinan and the Birds of Shadyside", Ralph Selle writes, "Providing a bird-

refuge in the midst of a great city will not bring world-applause like the development of oil industries, or even erecting the Petroleum building, but it shows a sentiment, an appreciation for the better things of life that must tend towards making the city a better place for people.”

Lucie followed in her family’s footsteps by spearheading Houston Audubon’s education program, Audubon Adventures, in the early 1990s. Lucie was able to raise the necessary \$70,000 in less than six months in order to provide this program to all 700 4th grade classrooms in HISD. Lucie was able to reach this goal through writing letters and grants to friends, corporations, and local foundations. Over the next three years, she raised over \$300,000 for Audubon Adventures. Lucie’s accomplishments were remarkable.

She passed her love and appreciation for conservation to her children, Emily and David, who are actively involved in environmental causes. Lucie Wray Todd was a very good friend to Houston Audubon and we will be forever grateful.

Notes about Lucie Wray Todd from Marshall Case for the 2016 “Education That Soars” Gala:

Marshall stated that he met Lucie at a Jungle Camp in Costa Rica, as they were both there for a conference in the early 1980’s. They started talking and he immediately noticed she was interested in education and brought up the Audubon Adventures program and got Lucie involved with this National program for Houston Audubon.

Marshall had to raise the money and develop the program to get Audubon Adventures up and running. In order to do this, he had to get several cities involved. Lucie was his connection with Houston, and she helped to promote the overall Audubon Adventures program in the Greater Houston Area.

The only way the school district said they would allow the program to be taught was if it was available to all 700 of the 4th grade classes in the district. Lucie, among others, helped to raise the \$70,000 to get this completed and raised the money in less than 6 months. Very impressive and important to spread the word about Audubon.

The Audubon Adventures program was delivered to over 3,000 classrooms over a 5-year span. Marshall had amazing things to say about Lucie. He felt she truly understood the importance of developing young leadership. And her loyalty to individuals is remarkable. Lucie even helped Marshall figure out his next steps when he chose to move forward from the National Audubon Society. She introduced him to George Archibald with the International Crane Foundation and after that Marshall was the head of education at the International Crane Foundation. This was a true gift from Lucie to Marshall.

Wray's Roost on 5th Street in High Island, Texas

Lucie Wray Todd made a generous donation to Houston Audubon in 2003 in order to build a new garage/storage building for the nature sanctuaries at High Island on the Bolivar Peninsula. It is dedicated to her and called Wray's Roost. It's a multi-purpose building including a small office, bathroom with small shower, and storage space.

